THE ASBESTOS TRAGEDY

20,000 Clydeside shipyard workers have caught incurable asbestos-related diseases since the 2nd World War. Many many women have caught these diseases because they were exposed to the deadly substance when they washed their men's clothes. It is now known that ordinary members of the public have been contaminated. Schools and other public buildings are full of asbestos. Strathclyde Region is trying to remove asbestos from all public buildings but the firms they employ to do the work aren't being monitored properly and they're putting the public at great risk. A schoolteacher recently died of mesothelioma who taught for thirty years in the Govan and surrounding area. Loose asbestos was found in a Glasgow school playground in August. In Australia we now have reports of children dying of asbestos-related diseases. This horror must stop.

CLYDESIDE ACTION ON ASBESTOS does not want to scare-monger. All we ask is that the authorities acknowledge the full-scale nature of the tragedy and do what they can to help the victims and put an end to future suffering. Other countries have already banned asbestos - Switzerland, Finland, Norway and Sweden; and Germany and Italy are in the process of it. We aren't asking for much.

Victims of asbestos disease don't get proper medical treatment and care. The terminally ill don't even have a hospice. They spend their last days fighting for their welfare rights from the DSS instead of being allowed to cope with the mental torture of having a disease which is incurable and which they know they'll die from sooner or later. The doctors are extremely reluctant even to diagnose these incurable diseases because of the legal implications. And the DSS medical authorities will say the victim has some other disease altogether because they don't want to pay out disablement benefits and allowances to the victims.

And all the time this is happening the asbestos industry is being allowed to continue using their deadly product, poisoning our children and contaminating tens of thousands of people. Govan is one of the blackspots on the asbestos map of the world.

The people of Govan must seek a pledge from their local politicians, that they will do everything in their power to stop the carnage and help the victims achieve justice, and commit themselves to put an end to the future suffering.